

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for protecting packets to be sent from a first network node to a second network node is provided. According to one embodiment, the method includes the steps of generating validity information for a packet, and generating a header for the packet, including the validity information. The method also includes the step of sending the packet including the header from the first network node to the second network node. The validity information includes all necessary information required for performing a validity check of the packet. Thus, no pre-established security association is needed to verify the validity of a packet.